NUMB. II.

The Prompter.

To be Continued TUESDAYS and FRIDAYS.

——— All the *World*'s a *Stage*,
And all the *Men* and *Women*, merely *Players*. Shakeſp.

——— *When we daily ſee ſo many Men* ACT *amiſs, can we entertain any Doubt, that a good* PROMPTER *is wanting?*

See NUMB. I.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15. 1734.

AS I was returning, the other Day, thro' one of the Skirts of this Great City, from a Walk, I had taken in the Fields, an Amuſement I have Ever been fond of, from the Opportunities, It affords me, of remarking, *Incognito*, the Diſpoſition, and Humours, of the People, I was tempted, by an unſeaſonable Curioſity, to add *One*, to a Crowd, about the Entrance of a ſmoaky Alley; which, by the Steam, and the Smell, I perceived, was the Paſſage into a Brewhouſe: While I was preparing to ask, upon what important Occaſion ſuch an Aſſembly had been drawn together, I found myſelf beat backward into the Dirt, by the violent Concuſſion, of a Fellow, in a Fright, who ran, furiouſly, againſt me, with his Face reverted, and convuls'd; and His Spirits in a Tumult, as extraordinary as the Uproar, and Purſuit, behind him.

Tho' I lay in the Condition of a Horſeman, diſmounted, in the Heat of a Charge, and felt myſelf *rode over*, and trampled upon, by the Hoofs of as *many* Beaſts, and as *ungovernable*, yet, after having made hard Shift, with the Loſs of one Glove, my Hat, and my Perriwig, to recover, in ſome meaſure, my Legs, I floated along, like an Eddy, and ſwam, forward, with the Crowd; crying out, with great Eagerneſs, to know the Cauſe of this Uproar; and was anſwer'd, by a Hundred Hoarſe Voices, at once, which bawl'd out from every Quarter, *An Exciſeman! An Exciſeman!* —— *We have been* BOILING *an Exciſeman!*

IT ſeems, a poor Fellow, of the Lower Claſs, of That unpopular Denomination, had concealed Himſelf behind ſome Barrels, in the Brewhouſe, with Intent, as was ſurmiz'd, to pry into Certain Arts, too abſtruſe for my Comprehenſion, and which the Maſter of the Building had his Reaſons for reſerving to Himſelf; and kept *veil'd* from the Curioſity of ſo uninvited an Inſpector. The firſt Conſequence of this Spy's Diſcovery, they told me, was a Demand to ſee his COMMISSION, but This He had, unfortunately, left at Home; and, ſo, the ſecond Event, and That, which had been the Foundation of all this Publick Diſorder, as well as of my own Private Calamity (tho' quite innocent, and unconcerned, in the Matter) was, an Attempt, of the Dray-men, to throw the poor Devil into the Copper. I can't directly ſay, I was ſorry for his Eſcape: But, however welcome It may have been to Himſelf, and his Fraternity, I am ſure, it has coſt *me* a *Fall*; for which, I have it in my Thoughts, to *demand Satisfaction*, from ſome one of the weakeſt, and neareſt my own *Match*, among the Commiſſioners of His Majeſty's *Exciſe Office*.

IN the mean Time, it is my conſtant Practice, to let the firſt Uſe, I make of a Misfortune, be, an Examination, — what Improvement, Caution, or Advantage, It is poſſible to draw from it? By Effect of this Cuſtom, All my Diſappointments are turn'd into Benefits; and give Regulation to the Conduct of my Life. I am, therefore, warn'd, by ſuch an alarming Idea, — (a boil'd Exciſeman, in a Brewer's Copper!) — to pre-ſuſpect ſome extraordinary Treatment, which I myſelf might, probably, meet with, ſhou'd I plunge, unwarily, into Exerciſe of my Authority, without producing a COMMISSION; by which, I am *privileged* to be impertinent, and troubleſome; till I deſerve to be *hated*, for the Good of my Country.

I TOOK Occaſion, in my firſt Paper, juſt to hint at my illuſtrious Deſcent, from the ancient, and venerable, Race of the BROOMSTICKS; But I, now, find it neceſſary, to deduce the manifeſt Right of my Claim: Yet, becauſe, in a Nation of *Trade*, it is frequent for thriving Citizens, Men of no *Stock*, but their *own*, to depreciate theſe Advantages of *Birth*, and *Original*, I proteſt, that, tho' I *do* it, It is not, in the leaſt, out of *Vanity*, but, merely, to prevent, and diſcountenance, a miſtaken Self-Preference, which might ariſe, in ſome of my Readers, who had *Great Men* to their Forefathers, when they weigh *Themſelves* againſt a *Philoſopher*; whereas the HERALDS (who are, or ought to be, well acquainted with Us BROOMSTICKS) could convince them, if they thought it their Intereſt, that the Beſt Blood, they are ſo proud of, is no worthier, than *We* are.

Ex quovis Ligno non fit Mercurius, may have been a good Saying in its Day, and given Excluſion,

ſion, perhaps, not unjuſtly, to the Pretenſions of *Oaken Clubs*, or *Crab-Sticks*; but, I ſhall make it obvious, beyond all Queſtion, that the *Broomſticks* could never have been meant by That Proverb: For, our Claim to Diſtinction of Blood, as a celebrated Modern Poet expreſſes it, of another Family, far leſs ancient,

——— *So high extends,*
That 'mid'ſt the Pagan GODS, *our Lineage ends!*

WODEN, the famous Idol of the Warlike *Saxons*; or, to write it, as it ought to be pronounc'd, WOOD-EN, was the *Firſt* of our Family. He, who gave Name to one of the Days of the Week, gave Original to the Race of the *Broomſticks!* This laſt Denomination was an Honourable, ſuperadditional, *Appellative*; and (juſt in the ſame manner, as *Cæſar* was ſaluted IMPERATOR) by the united Acclamation of his Armies, beſtow'd on our great Founder, to diſtinguiſh, and ſpecify His Renown, for *ſweeping*, as it were, from the Face of the Earth, the Oppreſſors of Merit, or Innocence.

I WISH I could ſay, that we had not, in the Courſe of ſo many Ages, degenerated from the Virtues of our Anceſtor: Long Deſcendencies of Blood, like long Currents of Water, are apt to gather Mud, in their Paſſage; and grow fuller, and fouler, exactly, in the ſame Proportion. — But, be That excus'd, as it may; There have never been wanting, among us, ſome *Sprigs*, of eminent Name, and Diſtinction; Nay, it is no Secret to the Youth, and the *Fair*, in moſt Countries of *Europe*, that Numbers, even among the Old Women, of our Race, have made high *Flights*, and *Advances*, in *Witchcraft*: And, not to be aſham'd of avowing an honourable Truth, there are, yet, left, *Broomſticks*, in Abundance, who are much abler *Conjurers*, than ſome other Perſons, who ſhall be nameleſs: Truly, All the *Branches* of our Family, continue celebrated, to this Day, for the *tender Pliancy* of their Temper, which, yet, they can, readily, upon occaſion, change into *Severity*; for *Correction* of the Bold, and the Wanton.

AFTER *This*, can it ever be doubted, by what *Right* I ſet up for a *Prompter*?

AMONG the generous Knights Errant, my Progenitors, It was always a Cuſtom, to ſend *Warnings*, before *Defiance*; I ſhall imitate them, in This, as in other, laudable Particulars; and *ſweep away* no Folly, Abuſe, or Preſumption, 'till I have *prompted* them, over, and over; But, if after ſuch fair, and repeated Caveats, there ſhall be found any Reprobate Obſtinacy, that deſpiſes my *Word* in the *Ear*, or calls in Queſtion my Authority; I ſhall, in ſuch Caſes, ſhew no Regard to Diſtinction of Perſons, but ſweep the Front, and Side, *Boxes*, with as little Ceremony, and Reſpect, as is ſhewn, before the Curtain, by *Broomſticks* of inferior Degree, to obtruding Apples, and Orange Peels.

I KNOW, well enough, that we have People, of the old Delicacy of Breeding, who, wanting that Maſculine Improvement of Manners, which has, lately, been imported among us, may be ſo weak, as to ſuppoſe it, a Rudeneſs, to ſweep a Man out of his own Houſe, let his Condition be ever ſo *dirty*; But I would not adviſe the Managers of any of the *Theatres* about Town, to be too *ſecure*, upon this Preſumption: I, therefore, give them this early Notice, that They may take Care to be *cleaner*, and more *decent*, than They have been, for ſome Time paſt; or I ſhall ſpring out upon them, where they leaſt expect me, and cover them, with the Contempt of the Publick, and the *Duſt*, which Themſelves have been gathering.

I RESOLVE to ſweep, too, among their *Actors*; but, ſince, where Rubbiſh lies ſo thick, I muſt either be choak'd, or work in a Muffler, I will, firſt, make Intereſt with the Scavengers; who may ſend Help, to dig down the Heap; till they have reduc'd it within my Compaſs.

THERE are other Places, of ſo much Greater Importance, which have grown duſty, for want of my Bruſhing, that I am, almoſt, in Deſpair, when I look round me, leſt I ſhould find myſelf *worn* to the *Stumps*, before I can go thro' with my Buſineſs: But, no Matter, ——

Not, for Itſelf, *The Taper* Light *ſupplies:*
But waſtes, *for others, and, in* Darkneſs, *dies.*

ADVERTISEMENT.

THERE being no Quality, more lovely than Gratitude, *I have taken it into Conſideration, that I ought not to let ſlip any Occaſion of ſhewing my Eſteem for this Virtue. — I ſhall begin, with an Inſtance of it, that will chiefly concern thoſe of the Softer Sex; as They, indeed, are beſt acquainted with the Merits of* Our Family, *and condeſcend to Receive us, at all Times, without Ceremony: — A Reſerve, which, toward other Perſons, and upon Lighter Occaſions, they are well known to practiſe, with the moſt circumſtantial Precaution.*

For Their ſakes therefore, I renounce a Vanity, which might, otherwiſe, be no ſmall Addition to the Gravity, and Influence, of a Man, of my Character. — I will diſcard all Mottos, GREEK, LATIN, HEBREW, WELSH, ARABICK, or CHALDEAN, *unleſs they are, firſt,* naturaliz'd, *and reduc'd into* Engliſh. — *I am compell'd to* except HIGH DUTCH; *becauſe the Ladies of* Great Britain *are grown ſo fond of it, of late, (as It is a Robuſt and Manly Language) that they are Learning to ſpeak it with their* Feet, *and their* Elbows.

It is poſſible too, I may receive the Thanks of our Poet Laureat, *upon ſo obliging an Occaſion; and the rather, becauſe I am under a Neceſſity of prompting that Great* Genius, *in my next Paper. And,* He, *who is, ſo often, engroſs'd by his Wit, as to loſe all Memory of His* own *Language, would have Reaſon to take it unkindly, if I ſhould give him the* Word, *in a* Foreign *one.*

Yet, I would not have Mr. Cibber *take Alarm, at this Declaration, as if he had any thing to apprehend from the Spleen of an* Enemy. *I have nothing further in my View, than to* bruſh off *the* Duſt *from his Character, and, without any Extreme, either of Malice, or Compliment, ſhew him to the World, in his* own natural Colours. — *I ſhall do the ſame, with Regard to Every other, Perſon, or Subject, I may have occaſion to mention, in the Courſe of my Paper; and, always preſerving the Severity of a Plain Speaker, and the Good Manners of a Gentleman, neither be afraid to* praiſe, *nor to* cenſure, *with a Freedom, that will give Way to nothing, but Impartiality.*

ADVERTISEMENT, *in* Poſtſcript.

There being no Pleaſure, livelier, or more Rational, than That of foreſtalling the Market of the Half-Wits, *and the* Jokelings, *I do, hereby, give Publick Notice, that the Great* B, *at the Bottom of my firſt Page, is not placed there, to ſignify* Blockhead, *but* Broomſtick.

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